

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

October 6, 2011

The Sumter County Tourist Development Tax Council convened in regular session on Thursday, October 6, 2011 at The Villages Sumter County Service Center, 7375 Powell Road, Room 102, Wildwood, Florida with the following members present to wit: Chairman Douglas Gilpin, Bret Hage, Steve Lind, Warren Maddox, Dan McCormic, and Douglas Tharp. The following individuals were also present and acting in their respective official capacity: Bradley Arnold, County Administrator; Tina Chavez, Financial Services Specialist; and Lorrie Simmons, Financial Services Coordinator.

Chairman Gilpin called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. The invocation was given by Dan McCormic, followed by the flag salute lead by Doug Tharp.

Welcome was given by Chairman Gilpin

I. OLD BUSINESS

- a. NONE

Mr. Robby Strickland entered the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

II. New Business

- a. Minutes of Quarterly Meeting held on July 7, 2011.

No comments were made related to draft minutes.

Doug Tharp moved, with a second by Warren Maddox, to approve the minutes from July 7, 2011. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

- b. Financial report overview was presented.

No comments were made.

Warren Maddox moved, with a second by Doug Tharp, to approve. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

Bradley Arnold requested that item II (d) under New Business be presented prior to the item II(c) Grant Submittals. Information presented would be relevant to the discussion of upcoming grant applications.

Committee, via consensus, authorized the change.

- d. **Bradley Arnold – County Administrator**

- i. **Sunshine Law** - Bradley Arnold noted the website link listed in the agenda packet and encouraged committee members to visit the website for a full review of the Sunshine Law. Items that were highlighted were the communication and conflict of interest aspects.

Communication between committee members regarding any matters that may come before the TDC for consideration is strictly forbidden outside of the advertised public meetings. Communication includes verbal and written (i.e. e-mails or text messages) communication.

Committee members that feel an upcoming application may cause a conflict of interest should contact staff immediately so the issue may be resolved prior to the TDC meeting. Conflicts of interest are situations where a committee member may (or appears to) receive some type of benefit from decisions made by the TDC. Committee members should refrain from discussion and voting on matters where there is a conflict of interest.

Mr. Arnold also reminded the group that all communication regarding the TDC is considered public record and open for public review.

All committees, including the TDC, will receive a Sunshine Law review from Mr. Arnold.

- ii. **The Tourism Plan**, as prepared by E-5 Solutions, is a solid document. Mr. Arnold expressed that the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners wants the TDC to take the plan's recommendations into consideration when considering grant applications.
 - iii. **The TDC Grant Guidelines and Grant Application** is an approved document by the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners for TDC and staff usage. The "Heads to Beds" component is an important factor that the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners wants the TDC to continue using when making recommendations. The Sumter County Board of County Commissioners wants lodging owners to know that the time they take to collect the tourism tax and submit them to the State, is worth their effort.

The recommendations presented by the TDC to the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners are considered and appreciated, but under State Law, the Sumter County Board of County Commissioners has the final spending approval of Tourist Development Taxes collected.
 - iv. **Sumter County Board of County Commissioners Workshop Review** – Mr. Arnold communicated the September 20, 2011 Board's workshop discussions to the committee.
- c. Grant application submittals

Wayfinding Signs (Phase 1 Development of Signage Master Plan) - Mr. Arnold was present and gave a brief description of the intent of the project. He explained this would be a joint venture between Sumter County and tourism tax funds.

Mr. Tharpe questioned if the second phase would have a "not to exceed" amount for the project. Mr. Arnold replied that Phase 1 would address projected costs involved, and this figure would be used in the permitting process during Phase 2.

Mr. Strickland expressed that according to Item Number 2, under Ineligible Uses (of TDC Funds) listed on page 9 of the Sumter County Tourism Grant Guidelines, this project may not qualify for TDC funds.

Mr. Tharpe suggested staff get a legal opinion on the project eligibility for funds and the TDC's recommendation would be contingent upon a favorable review.

Doug Tharp moved, with a second by Dan McCormic, to recommend the grant application in the amount \$12,500, pending a favorable opinion from the County Attorney. The motion carried by a majority vote of 6-1 (denial by Robby Strickland).

Sumter County Fishing Classic & Festival – Due to Mr. Lind's direct connection with applicant The Tracy's Point Corp., Mr. Lind abstained from commenting and voting on this application. Sharon from Tracy's Point was available for discussion and requested the application be withdrawn from consideration. Tracy's Point intends to submit an application next year for the same type of event.

The Committee, via consensus, authorized the withdrawal of the application from consideration.

III. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

- a. Next regular meeting date of January 5, 2012 was noted.
- b. Public Forum - There were no public comments.
- c. Added agenda item
 - 1. Mr. Gilpin – Inquired as to the research Mr. Hage was doing on portable bleachers.

Mr. Hage reported that he found and received a quote for four, 21 foot long, portable, non-towable bleachers for \$4,900. This would give seating for approximately 100 people.

Mr. Strickland inquired about a proper storage location for the bleachers. Mr. Gilpin suggested that the County may have such a location.

Mr. Arnold communicated to the Committee that he had recently had discussion with the Sumter County Fair Board, who is interested in submitting a TDC grant application requesting seating for the old inside arena also known as the "Cow Palace". The Fair Board might be interested in including the portable bleachers in their grant application and being in charge of

storing, loaning and/or renting the bleachers. Mr. Arnold was asked to make an inquiry to the Fair Board regarding their interest in portable bleachers.

IV. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.